REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

By this amendment, claims 17 and 19 have been drafted as independent claims. Claims 2, 4, 13, 18, 20, 21 and 22 are amended. Claims 1-23 are pending, of which claims 1, 6-12, 14 and 16 are withdrawn. Claims 24 and 25 are new.

Favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

General remarks

Claim 4 is amended based on page 17, line 24 of the description.

Claims 2, 13, 18, 20, 21 and 22 are amended based on page 8, lines 30-35 of the description. The word "intermolecularly cross-linked" is a synonym of "this cross-linking being produced by reaction between the different chains constituting the polysaccharide derivatives".

Claims 17 and 19, which were only objected to, are now drafted in independent form.

Claims 24 and 25 are new and concern a support material, respectively a percolation membrane, consisting essentially of a cross-linked polymer compound comprising a radical of formula (II).

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 2-5, 13, 15, 18 and 20-23 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Shibata et al.. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 2-5, 13, 15, 18 and 20-23 concern a support material or a percolation membrane consisting essentially of a cross-linked polymer compound comprising a radical of formula (I) or (II) wherein said cross-linked polymer compound is intermolecularly cross-linked in a tri-dimensional network and therefore is insoluble in organic solvent.

Claims 24 and 25 concern a support material, respectively a percolation membrane, consisting essentially of a cross-linked polymer compound comprising a

radical of formula (II) wherein said cross-linked polymer compound is intermolecularly cross-linked in a tri-dimensional network and therefore is insoluble in organic solvents.

Shibata et al. disclose intramolecularly cross-linked (1→3)-β-D-glucan having a single helix conformation. In Shibata et al., the purpose of the cross-linking agent is to maintain the single helix conformation of each (1→3)-β-D-glucan chain individually. As a result, the intramolecularly cross-linked (1→3)-β-D-glucan of Shibata et al. retain at least 50% of their single helix conformation even after one month of storage in an aqueous solution or suspension at 4°C.

Shibata et al. doe not disclose any intermolecularly cross-linked polymer in a tri-dimensional network. On the contrary, Shibata et al. teaches away intermolecular cross-linking since (1→3)-β-D-glucan are used as single molecules for their antitumor activity, and thus intermolecular cross-linking has to be avoided. Furthermore, Shibata et al. do not disclose nor suggest that intermolecularly cross-linked polymer in a tri-dimensional network comprising a radical of formula (I) or (II) (and therefore a support material or a percolation membrane consisting essentially of such cross-linked polymer) would be insoluble in organic solvent.

Therfore Shibata et al. do not teach nor suggest the support material or the percolation membrane of the claimed invention.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, favorable reconsideration is respectfully solicited. Should the Examiner believe that a discussion with the undersigned counsel would expedite prosecution of the application, a telephone call to 703-812-5325 would be welcomed.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fees associated with this response or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 13-3402.

Respectfully submitted,

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Attorney Docket No.: PET-1802-D02

Date: August 17, 2009